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NIJH Accredited Hospices

Jewish hospice programs in
the United States

NIJH Jewish Hospice Manual

The Jewish Hospice Accreditation and Re-Accreditation Conferences

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- ♦ For Families Of Jewish Terminally Ill ♦ At Bedside ♦
Self-Healing And Hospice Care ♦ The Jewish Orphaned
Adult ♦ How To Console ♦ Jewish Hospice: To Live, To
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Bio-Medical Issues & Spiritual Issues ♦ 2 Set CD; Hope:
A Powerful Ray of Sunshine ♦ The NIJH Living Will ♦
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The National Institute for Jewish Hospice

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CARING



FOR JEWISH HOSPICE PATIENTS

By

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The National Institute for Jewish Hospice

Thanks



For their work on the draft version of this publication

What is NIJH?

NIJH is the National Institute for Jewish Hospice. It was established in 1985, with headquarters in New York and Los Angeles. It is a resource center for hospice care of Jewish patients. NIJH is directed by professional leadership of scholars, administrators and clinical experts.

Why Would A Hospice Become Accredited By NIJH?

1. To enhance the hospice's ability to respond to the needs of Jewish patients and their families.
2. To continue to educate staff and volunteers on cultural and religious diversity.
3. To develop human palliative strategies that are tailored to the needs of Jewish patients.

What Topics Are Available In Educational Material For Staff And Volunteers?

Customs and Culture
Ethics
Art of Hope
Suffering vs. Pain
Grief and mourning

What Are The Learning Goals of NIJH?

1. To gain enhanced understanding of Jewish culture and religion and their impact on death and dying.
2. To integrate understanding of Jewish medical ethics
3. To discover unique aspects of Jewish grief and mourning

Jewish Heritage and Background

The Jewish culture has a deep heritage tied to ancient Hebrew Scriptures. Traditionally all Jewish people are those who are descendants of Abraham, and they originated as a people in the Middle East. They live under the statutory law, called Halakha,

given by Moses and found in the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). The Jewish people live by affirmation of the Jewish law.

Jewish Diversity

The Jewish people are as diverse as any sub-group of our population, with variations in religious and cultural identification. In general, there is a continuum ranging from Ultra Orthodox to secular Jews.

End of life customs and practices vary by the individual's belief system

Views in this booklet are representative of all streams of Judaism

Hasidic / Ultra Orthodox

Abide very strictly to Jewish law

Distinctive in dress;

Men; black suits, long coats, hats

Married Women; Cover hair with wig or scarf (may shave head)

Modesty is very important

Men should not touch women other than their wife; a woman may not touch men other than her husband

Look to religious authority for decisions

Orthodox / Centrist Orthodox

Relatively strict on interpretation of law and ethics

Torah cannot be altered

Conservative and Reconstructionist

Conservative;

View Judaism in historical context, refer to rabbinical rulings

Reconstructionist;

View Judaism as evolving civilization

Possess more individual autonomy for decisions

Grief and Mourning

Aninut

The time period between the death and burial of one of the seven close relatives (father, mother, brother, sister, wife or husband, son, daughter)

The prevailing emotion is despair

The need is to focus on burial and fiscal arrangements

The mourner refrains from most social, personal and religious activities

Shivah

The 7 Day mourning period after burial

Family and friends visit to comfort the mourners and remember the loved one

The Jewish community usually provides food for mourners

There are no Shivah visits on Sabbath and major Jewish Holy Days

Hospice caregivers should pay a Shivah (condolence) visit or make a condolence call

A candle is lit for the seven days of Shivah

Kaddish (mourner's prayer) recited daily during Shivah and Sheloshim

Sheloshim

The 30 day period following burial (Shivah time is included in the 30 day count)

The mourner is encouraged to leave home after Shivah

The mourner does not participate in parties or listen to music

The end of Sheloshim concludes the mourning period, except for the loss of parents. The mourning period for parents is one year.

Resources Available On The Internet

The National Institute for Jewish Hospice

www.nijh.org

Foundation for Jewish Culture

www2.jewishculture.org

Judaism 101

www.jewfaq.org/index.html

BBC Religion and Ethics – Judaism

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism

Obligations of The Jewish Family

The Jewish culture values the family's involvement in the care of their loved one. You should be aware of a number of obligations that you might find in a typical Jewish family;

1. It is often a priority of the family to keep the physical environment of the patient clean.
2. The family will work to relieve the patient of financial worries and take care of business issues.
3. The family will provide companionship to the patient, and they will work to cheer the patient, and "humanize" the environment of the patient.
4. It is part of the Jewish tradition that suffering has meaning. The patient and family may want to talk about what the suffering might mean. It is important to note that pain is a physical manifestation. Suffering is usually thought of as a psychological or spiritual manifestation.

It is the task of the hospice staff and volunteers to ensure support to the patient and family in all of these domains.

Support Through Jewish Cultural Traditions And Values

Prayer may be accompanied by a prayer shawl (tallit) and phylacteries (tefilin – small black boxes worn on an arm and head that contain Scriptural passages)

The Jewish people live by certain dietary laws; for example, they do not eat pork or shellfish, and they do not mix meat and dairy products or utensils.

There are specific rules for food preparation and utensils.

Assist the family in finding kosher meals if it is important to them

The Sabbath

The Jewish Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday night and continues to sundown of Saturday. The celebration of the Sabbath includes Sacramental wine, Challah (twisted bread) and candles.

Major Holidays

Rosh Hashana – Jewish New Year

Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement

Sukkot – Festival of Tabernacles

Passover – 8 day festival celebrating exodus

Shavuot – Pentecost - Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai and harvest

Chanukah – Festival of Lights -lighting candles progressively over 8 days

Purim – highlighted by reading Scroll of Esther

Staff and volunteers may assist patient and family in celebrating the festivals

Understanding Jewish Medical Ethics From A Jewish Perspective

1. **Autonomy: It is the patient's right to choose among available alternatives.** In Jewish culture the patient's right is voluntarily limited to being consistent with Jewish law. Traditional Jews will look to their rabbi to ensure that their decision-making is consistent with Jewish law.
2. **Beneficence: Physicians provide health care that is beneficial to patient.** In Jewish culture physicians are obligated to heal and benefit patients, and patients are obligated to seek beneficial treatment.
3. **Non-Maleficence: Physicians avoid providing care that is harmful.** (*May contend with beneficence.*) In Jewish tradition, individuals have obligations to properly care for themselves and avoid exposing themselves to bodily harm.
4. **Justice: Providing care that is good for the society as a whole.** (*May contend with Autonomy and Beneficence.*) There is a fair allocation of limited health resources. In Jewish culture patient priority is first-come, first-served. In case of conflict, priority may be based on hierarchy related to social worth.

Advanced Directives and Wills

Ethical "Wills" – are personal communications to loved ones via writing, audio or video about what the patient has valued in life.

Ethical wills can help foster and highlight a patient's values and beliefs and transmit them to future generations.

Living Wills and Durable Power of Attorney (DOA). The Jewish faith generally is supportive of palliative care vs. heroic efforts, with the exception that Orthodox authorities may require a family to seek heroic measures. A Jewish Living Will and Power of Attorney form that reflects Jewish law (Halakha) is available for hospice patients from NIJH.

Care of the Body After Death

The Jewish way is to bury immediately and mourn gradually.

At Death;

1. Eyes and mouth should be shut closed
2. Limbs and fingers should be discreetly straightened
3. Body should not be moved (unless for the honor or safety of the body)

Preparing The Body

1. The body is washed and prepared by the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society), if available, or by family members.
2. The body is dressed in white shroud
3. A sheet is drawn over the face of the deceased
4. The family should contact a rabbi and the funeral home
5. The body should not be left alone until buried
6. Bury promptly, preferably within 24 hours. No burials are scheduled on the Sabbath or major religious Holy Days.
7. No possessions are buried with the body
8. Autopsies are not permitted without express permission of a rabbi.

The Funeral

1. The casket should be closed during the funeral service
2. No flowers should adorn the casket
3. Secular fraternity "rituals" are discouraged, but permitted (such as Masons, Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, etc.)

Reform

Broader interpretation of the law

More lenient re: beliefs and social conveniences

Mourning Practices:

- Home environment may not embrace strict rules of Orthodox (wear regular clothing, etc.,)
- May shorten mourning period

Secular Jews

Secular Jews have cultural connections but no religious observances

The Relationship Between A Jewish Patient And Health Care Workers

Judaism affirms that individuals inhabit a body that belongs to God. Healthcare professionals are expected to partner with the patient in ;

1. Prevention
2. Cure
3. Comfort
4. Palliation
5. Understanding and support

Responding To Questions From Patients And Families

When working with a Jewish family, honesty must always be laced with **HOPE**;

- That the patient may feel better / improve / be cured
- For quality days with family
- To be pain free
- To celebrate holidays with loved ones

Don't "dis-hope" the patient: bring live flowers rather than cut flowers that wither and die.

Respect denial;

- Denial may assist in maintaining emotional integrity
- Remember; need of patient are primary

HOPE is a major theme in the Jewish faith.